The conjuncture of the soul with the organ of thought, and thus with nature, is the cause of its apprehension of the actual condition of the nature of the Universe and of the soul itself.
—PATANJALI

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DECLINE AND REBIRTH

WITH the decline of classical civilization and the rise to power of the Church elevated to authority by Constantine, the ancient teachings of occult knowledge, known to the adepts and their disciples, began to be withdrawn. The reason for this shadowing of the truth is given at some length in *The Secret Doctrine,* and referred to also by Mr. Judge in an early chapter of *The Ocean of Theosophy*. Such conceptions as the sevenfold nature of man gave keys to occult powers, and with the onset of the Dark Ages the danger of the misuse of those powers could not be risked.

The forms of observance that were once filled with profound meaning became the mummery and pretense of priests, so that, naturally enough, the sharply critical rationalism of later centuries could see nothing in these activities but superstitious imposture. It was the fate of the dying age to bequeath to later generations full justification for skepticism and unbelief. By the nineteenth century, when H.P.B. began her work, genuine occultism in the West had long since gone underground, while the idea of inner or hidden powers was familiar only through the warped and inverted conceptions of Spiritualism.

How is it, one may wonder, that this closing of the doors on the doctrines of ancient mysteries could serve as the historical prologue for their revival in the form of the Theosophical teachings? The books speak of the launching of the Theosophical Movement as an evolutionary necessity, and there were some notable

philosophical antecedents in the messengers who came to the West in earlier centuries—men such as Bruno, Mesmer, and some others. But even if it be acknowledged that there were stirrings of ancient longings among the more intuitive members of the Western countries, the tide of materialism had by no means finished its rise in the closing years of the nineteenth century. Denial of all spiritual reality continued into the twentieth, and seemed to have its confirmation in the dread events which have now left their mark on all mankind.

But if we study *The Secret Doctrine* carefully, we may find reason to think that the founding of the Theosophical Movement and the renewal of these teachings came as response to another great tide, sometimes spoken of as the further incarnation of *Manas* or Mind. Again and again are given hints that the present is a time of increased responsibility, of more coherent individuality, when processes of growth once entrusted to the guidance of wise teachers have become the immediate task of the people themselves. Believing and faithful following will no longer fulfill the needs of human development. Men must begin to know in and of themselves the meaning of their life and experience. Truth has become a matter of inward recognition.

In the days of ancient Greece, before the Mysteries fell into decay, the evolutionary processes of both worlds and men were illustrated by symbolic performances, reverenced by the multitude, though understood only by the initiates to whom deeper instruction had been given. Yet these symbolic modes of instruction accomplished a great educational purpose, ordering the turbulent psychic principles of the people and rooting in them sublime feelings which fed their spiritual longings. The true knowledge of the Hierophants awaited those capable of reaching beyond the forms of the symbols, for these, after special training and tests, would be given oral instructions in the sacred crypts, being thus admitted to the final Mysteries.

But when the Athenians decided, upon the advice of Aristogeiton, to charge a fee for initiation, the secrets were withdrawn from Mysteries, leaving only the empty forms. The *Epoptae,* "who see things as they are," withdrew, emigrating to secret places, while the dead letter of the mythic performances became the basis for the new religion of ignorance and dogma.

And so it was with other ancient observances. As the inner meaning was first neglected, then ignored and forgotten, these too became empty forms. In his exposition of the content of the third chapter of the *Gita*—given in *Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita*—Mr. Judge remarks that there is little he can explain of portions of Krishna's discourse on Sacrifice, since the subject has become wholly unacceptable to modern minds. As he puts it:

> To say all I think about sacrifice would only expose me to a charge of madness, superstition, or ignorance; it certainly would on every hand be received with incredulity. And while sneers or disbelief have no terrors, it is needless to advert to certain points in the chapter. Yet in passing them by, some sadness is felt that a high civilization should on these subjects be so dense and dark. . . . With the culmination of the dark age it was, however, natural that the last vestige of sacrifice should disappear. On the ruins of the altar has arisen the temple of the lower self, the shrine of the personal idea. In Europe individualism is somewhat tempered by various monarchical forms of government which do not by any means cure the evil; and in America, being totally unrestrained and forming in fact the basis of independence here, it has culminated. Its bad effects—vaguely as yet shadowing the horizon—might have been avoided if the doctrines of the Wisdom-Religion had been also believed in by the founders of the republic. And so, after the sweeping away of the fetters forged by priestly dogma and kingly rule, we find springing up a superstition far worse than that which we have been used to call by the name. It is the superstition of materialism that bows down to a science which leads only to a negation.

Mr. Judge does point out that sacrifice, in the light of the *Gita,* is to be understood as simply duty. He explains that it is by reason of the universal reciprocity expressed in the interrelations of all forms of life that the great Wheel of Existence, which for us has the meaning of Evolution, is kept turning. To sacrifice is to do one's duty; it is, in a familiar phrase, "to act for and as the Self." And for those who recognize in the interdependence of beings the law of Brotherhood, sacrifice becomes a wholly natural fulfillment of the purpose of self-conscious intelligence and life. In past times, there were various forms of sacrificial observance that gave practical instruction in this law, but all such activities have died away with other symbolic practices established long ago by the teachers and founders of civilization. Since the moral law is no longer believed in, sacrifice is seen as a survival of outworn belief, and the

practices involving offerings as no more than superstition. But even in ritualistic sacrifice, Mr. Judge says, there were occult truths that gave such acts a practical potency, although, with the passing of knowledge of these things, such sacrifices no longer have value. "In such an age as this, the ritualistic sacrifice of a different age which has indeed a magical effect becomes a sacrifice to be performed by each man in his own heart."

Again the direction is to the inwardness of the higher life. Things once done under the direction of sages, and as matters of public observance, have now come under the rule of self-induced and self-devised effort. The compulsions of custom and the sanctions of authority cannot maintain embodied souls on the right course. Instead, for primary instruction and inspiration, we have philosophic teachings concerning the nature of man, and the twin doctrines of Karma and Reincarnation for guidance in working out our common salvation.

While a look at the world around us may bring many doubts concerning the inclinations of present-day people to think with any seriousness about "sacrifice," the extreme moral sickness of the age, at so many levels of existence, is deepening the inquiries men make into the meaning of their lives. And there is now of record a teaching about the class of beings to which humans belong. In the *Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge,* in a discussion of the difference between the higher and the lower ego in man, H.P.B. repeats the teaching on which, she says, the Christian doctrine of the atonement is based:

> The *Secret Doctrine* shows that the Manasa-Putras or incarnating EGOS have taken upon themselves, voluntarily and knowingly, the burden of all the future sins of their future personalities. Thence it is easy to see that it is neither Mr. A. nor Mr. B., nor any of the personalities that periodically clothe the Self-Sacrificing EGO, which are the real Sufferers, but verily the innocent *Christos* within us. Hence the mystic Hindus say that the Eternal Self, or the Ego (the one in three and three in one), is the "Charioteer" or driver; the personalities are the temporary and evanescent passengers; while the horses are the animal passions of man. It is, then, true to say that when we remain deaf to the Voice of our Conscience, we crucify the Christos within us.

This reply by H.P.B. to a question bears the full significance of man's Promethean mission on earth, at the same time illuminat-

ing the puzzles of conscious existence. We feel both our greatness and our inadequacy; haunted by paradox and contradiction, we long for that singleness of intention which only the less than human can display. The Theosophical teaching speaks to the Man within the dual and composite being we remain so long as the purpose of our lives is unresolved. The Secret Doctrine makes it possible for us to understand that Krishna does not ask too much or anything impossible of Arjuna when he says:

> Even if the good of mankind only is considered by thee, the performance of thy duty is plain; for whatever is practiced by the most excellent men, that is also practiced by others. The world follows whatever example they set. There is nothing, O son of Pritha, in the three regions of the universe which it is necessary for me to perform, nor anything possible to obtain which I have not obtained; and yet I am constantly in action. If I were not indefatigable in action, all men would presently follow my example, O son of Pritha. If I did not perform actions these creatures would perish; I should be the cause of confusion of castes, and should have slain all these creatures. O son of Bharata, as the ignorant perform the duties of life from the hope of reward, so the wise man, from the wish to bring the world to duty and benefit mankind, should perform his actions without motives of interest. He should not create confusion in the understandings of the ignorant, who are inclined to outward works, but by being himself engaged in action should cause them to act also.

Madame Blavatsky said that she brought no new truths, but only the string that tied them together. Yet this was a wondrous unification, a means of focusing the mind of the age in a way that brought to the surface hidden meanings. She gave a restoration of the vision of the ancients which empowered the individual to see for himself what was once hidden in allegory and symbol. The decline of outer forms became the birth of inner meanings, and the linkage between the two cycles was made by the living presence of H.P.B.

REFLECTIONS ON KARMA

SINCE the idea that justice is at the foundation of things is so intuitively compelling, and since no moral principle has stronger presence in the spontaneous longings of human beings, it may seem strange to some that the teaching of Karma is said by Madame Blavatsky to be *"the* most difficult" of all the tenets of Theosophy. Why should this be? People can at least reason about the operation of moral law, and there are many clear statements given on the subject.

Perhaps the difficulty arises from the human desire to know more about the workings of Karma than is possible for the inquirer. In *The Key to Theosophy,* when asked for "some concrete example of the action of Karma," H.P.B. replied:

> That I cannot do. We can only feel sure, as I said before, that our present lives and circumstances are the direct results of our own deeds and thoughts in lives that are past. But we, who are not Seers or Initiates, cannot know anything about the details of the working of the law of Karma.

Yet the general principle, that every effect follows from a cause, and that the relation between action and reaction governs the moral as well as the physical world, is not obscure at all. Moreover this rule, as the basis for understanding events of every sort, quite evidently makes possible all the knowledge we possess. The very idea of rational inquiry depends upon the conviction that effect follows from cause, so that whatever we speak of as being an "explanation" has this meaning for us because of our faith in the rule of causation. In this sense, the idea of Karma is not only self-evidently true, but the condition of all thought.

Nevertheless, problems about the working of Karma do arise, and are reflected in the questions of inquirers. There is the question, for example, of whether it is possible to "interfere" with the Karma of another person. Man is said to have free will, but would not even *help* from someone else circumscribe an individual's freedom?

Again, the teaching speaks of "undeserved suffering." How, in a universe truly governed by Karma, can this be possible? Should not the individual have complete immunity in relation to any suffering the cause of which he has not himself set in motion?

Such questions are legitimate and need attention. They are asked for the reason that, while the principle involved in the Law of Karma is simple enough, the field of its operations—which is the world and the vast area of human nature—is complex and by no means wholly known. So the operation of a law which is simple in the abstract becomes difficult to recognize in the concrete reality of its expression.

What has been added to the subject of "Karma" in the formulation of these two questions? Quite obviously, *beings* have been added. And if we knew all there is to know about beings, we should have no trouble in understanding the workings of Karma in all their relationships. We must, therefore, study beings in order to understand Karma. After all, "There is no Karma without a being to make it and feel its effects."

Being is a term signifying differentiation and limit, and since our knowledge begins with differentiation we are able to have knowledge of beings. Yet the "beinghood" which exists at the very beginning of the causation which leads to manifestation is difficult to conceive of. There is this *Secret Doctrine* statement (I, 634-35):

> . . . at the first flutter of renascent life, Svabhavat . . . passes, at every new rebirth of Kosmos, from an inactive state into one of intense activity; . . . it differentiates, and then begins its work through that differentiation. This work is KARMA.

At this stage—the "first flutter"—there can hardly be those particularized beings that will exist ages later, after the full range of states and planes of matter has been projected upon the screen of time. Initial causation, then, will have a much more *general* origin. In illustration of this we may think of the broad conditions to which *all* the beings involved in the present cycle of evolution are subject. As we come down the scale of differentiation, causation grows more particularized—or individual—although the separate patterns of action thus begun are always within the larger framework established during prior and more unified states of being. To be a human being, for example, is to be subject to certain universal conditions which are the experience or destiny of all humans, by reason of their nature. The "freedom" we speak of, which exists for man and through which he forges his future, must always be in relation to those general conditions of being human. Only the principles of man's nature which participate in individual choice are able to generate and feel the effects of indi-

vidual Karma.

So the Karma experienced by a human being is of necessity both individual and collective. Moreover, since we continually affect one another in both our thoughts and our actions, we are joined in our Karma by this mutual influence, and this holds true whether or not we are aware of the ranges of interdependent action. Thus we are truly parts of one another, united with others in intricate and subtle ways. We are united, in the highest sense, through our spiritual identity. We are united through the all-pervasive Akasa—the substratum which, as Mr. Judge remarks, gives meaning to the idea of Universal Brotherhood. We may also be united to others in another way by sharing in the common stuff of the psychic nature, especially when we act by impulse in response to waves of popular feeling, falling into paths of behavior determined by the mass suggestion of the times. It seems evident that only when we are wholly conscious of the basis of our choices, and choose deliberately, apart from and looking down upon, all influences which come from planes below our noetic awareness, can we be said to be truly individual and free. Yet, paradoxically, right choices made from the viewpoint of the inner, spiritual man will spring from a sense of conscious identification with the spiritual intelligence in other beings; and will in this way be lacking in *personal* individuality. The idea of liberation from the bonds of Karma—finally realized in the perfection of the Karmaless sage or adept—could hardly be understood except in terms of the gradual elimination of the personal or separative focus of choice in the individual.

So there is a sense in which the solitary act is practically inconceivable. How could one ever act alone? Therefore, the conception of Karma in relation to private, completely separate units is pure abstraction and has virtually no application to the real situations of human life.

Is then the man never truly "individual"?

A simple answer to this question is hardly possible. For in considering its implications, we must call to mind those heroic souls who, all through history, have stood firm against the pressures and persuasions of their time, faithful instead to an inner integrity that is the wonder and the greatness of the Promethean spirit. A closed, mechanistic logic must not be allowed to dissipate the splendid paradoxes which oppose every attempt to reduce the

transcendent and incommensurable to finite terms. We forget, in submitting to mechanistic reasoning, that we are concerned with *living* unities when we consider human beings; that both the finite and the infinite are joined in close embrace wherever the principle of mind has found a matrix through which it can begin to know itself; and that the yearning, striving, aspiring quality which the Unknown Reality imparts to the sensitive material of its embodying forms is a kind of "translation" of matter into spirit, since all—both the high and the low, the wakened and the sleeping, and the dreaming, too—are ultimately *one*.

It follows, then, that we are thinking well about Karma and its operations only when, in every crucial problem or relationship, we recognize paradoxes of this sort. The value of finite reasoning lies, finally, in exhausting its potentialities to the point where we are forced to recognize the presence in us of something which lies beyond all conditions, which makes forms only to transcend them; yet which the personal consciousness first senses and begins to seek in its conditioned and knowable reflections. Symbols are the bridge which unites these two kinds of knowing.

The question of whether "helping" another interferes with his Karma brings out the full spectrum of such subtleties. What is it to "help" another? What must we know in order to help? If men progress *only* by self-induced and self-devised effort, how does true help "work"? All the issues raised by Socrates in his investigation of whether or not virtue can be taught enter into this question. Help which lowers the resolve of man to help himself is not help. But how does one tell what effect on another a contemplated act will have? Who could know such things?

The teachers of children learn only from years of experience when to encourage a child, when to "help" him with his work, and when to remain silent. The teacher whose sense of fitness guides him in such decisions has intuitive understanding of the most profound mysteries—an understanding that might well be called "soul-knowledge" of human needs. Involved is a sure feeling for the cycles of inward growth in the child, of how the fragile plant of self-reliance will somehow become strong, of the powers which seek opportunity for expression through the imperfect vehicle of a child's body and not yet developed psychic nature.

Having this understanding, the teacher helps by "being" the child for an interval. Such teaching is an act of love. It is in the

nature of both the child and the teacher to join in this unity. For the golden moment of high inspiration, the two are indeed *one*. An ancient law comes into play; the brotherhood of life declares itself; and we are able to say, "The child was helped." There was no interference with Karma by this act. A higher order of being than the separation we observe with our senses was brought into play by the teacher, and its benefit was received ("under Karma") by the child. The logic of the lower order may seem violated, but actually, its secret meaning, its inner reason for being, was fulfilled. Acts done in wisdom, in behalf of the common self, cannot disturb or interfere.

The most sublime instance of this order of help that we know is almost certainly the "Guardian Wall" spoken of in *The Voice of the Silence*.

Similar considerations enter into examination of the idea of "undeserved suffering." The child, for example, is a part of the family. Sometimes it is necessary for a parent to cause the child pain, as in treatment of some sort of illness or accident. The child is not equipped to understand the need for this pain, so the mother soothes the child through the ordeal with unmeasured generosity of heart. She adds something of her being to the inexperienced psyche of the child, which is not ready for full understanding of the cost of regaining health. The elemental intelligence of the child's organism, although now keyed to pitches of sensation—of pain and pleasure—beyond those natural to bodies not yet endowed with a nascent principle of mind, has not had time to be overshadowed by reflective understanding and acceptance of pain.

Similarly, every ego, conceived as a visitant from higher planes, a soul bent on a mission of self-sacrifice and service, must, in order to fulfill its high hierarchical intent, borrow from nature, from the vast reservoir of life, a portion of the raw materials of existence as the foundation for the vast evolutionary task. Those raw materials called "lives," while sensitive units of being, have made no individual choices as yet, but are now caught in the painful complexities generated by the needs of the incarnating intelligence. So, one could say, the psychic tension and suffering that come to the sensitive material is "undeserved," and therefore the great law of balance swings into action to compensate the strain-

ing psychic consciousness with the restoring dream of devachan—all in order that the work of the world may be done, and that, in future ages, the beckoning vistas of the higher life may become known to more and more beings, and the root law of life, which is Compassion Absolute, may be fulfilled.

Our thinking about Karma will be greatly clarified if we begin with the highest possible conceptions of dynamic interaction instead of with the simple mechanical models which Western ideas about Nature and law have taught us. Mechanical notions of reality shut out the living truths in which we are instructed by our hearts. Consider the contrast with ordinary "cause and effect" in the characterization given the "first cause" or beginning of things in the article on "Kamadeva" in the *Theosophical Glossary:*

> Kama is the first conscious, *all-embracing desire* for universal good, love, and for all that lives and feels, needs help and kindness, the first feeling of infinite tender compassion and mercy that arose in the consciousness of the creative ONE FORCE, as soon as it came into life and being as a ray from the ABSOLUTE. Says the *Rig Veda,* "Desire first arose in IT, which was the primal germ of mind, and which Sages, searching with their intellect, have discovered in their heart to be the bond which connects Entity with non-Entity," or *Manas* with pure *Atma-Buddhi.*

There are several statements that will bear continued reflection in relation to the subject of Karma. One is from the *Key* (135): "Neither Atma nor Buddhi are ever reached by Karma, because the former is the highest aspect of Karma, *its working* agent of ITSELF in one aspect, and the other is unconscious *on this plane.*" Another is the following (*S.D.* I, 174-75):

> It stands to reason that a MONAD cannot either progress or develop, or even be affected by the changes of states it passes through. It is not of this world or plane, and may be compared only to an indestructible star of divine light and fire, thrown down on to our Earth as a plank of salvation for the personalities in which it indwells.

There is also this:

> "It [Parabrahm] is that which is supreme and not supreme," explains Mandukya Upanishad. It is "Supreme" as CAUSE, not supreme as effect. (*S.D.* I, 6.)

Finally, there is H.P.B.'s answer to a question about Karma, printed in the *Theosophist* for July, 1884 (p. 246):

> The course of a man's life is the resultant of two forces, namely, his former Karma and his will power.

ASTRAL INTOXICATION

THERE is such a thing as being intoxicated in the course of an unwise pursuit of what we erroneously imagine is spirituality. In the Christian Bible it is very wisely directed to "prove all" and to hold only to that which is good; this advice is just as important to the student of occultism who thinks that he has separated himself from those "inferior" people engaged either in following a dogma or in tipping tables for messages from deceased relatives—or enemies—as it is to spiritists who believe in the "summerland" and "returning spirits."

The placid surface of the sea of spirit is the only mirror in which can be caught undisturbed the reflections of spiritual things. When a student starts upon the path and begins to see spots of light flash out now and then, or balls of golden fire roll past him, it does not mean that he is beginning to see the real Self—pure spirit. A moment of deepest peace or wonderful revealings given to the student, is *not* the awful moment when one is about to see his spiritual guide, much less his own soul. Nor are psychical splashes of blue flame, nor visions of things that afterwards come to pass, nor sights of small sections of the astral light with its wonderful photographs of past or future, nor the sudden ringing of distant fairy-like bells, any proof that you are cultivating spirituality. These things, and still more curious things, will occur when you have passed a little distance on the way, but they are only the mere outposts of a new land which is itself wholly material, and only one remove from the plane of gross physical consciousness.

The liability to be carried off and intoxicated by these phenomena is to be guarded against. We should watch, note and discriminate in all these cases; place them down for future reference, to be related to some law, or for comparison with other circumstances of a like sort. The power that Nature has of deluding us is endless, and if we stop at these matters she will let us go no further. It is not that any person or power in nature has declared that if we do so

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NOTE.—This article was first printed in the *Path* for October, 1887, and was last reprinted in THEOSOPHY 3:256.

and so we must stop, but when one is carried off by what Böehme calls "God's wonders," the result is an intoxication that produces confusion of the intellect. Were one, for instance, to regard every picture seen in the astral light as a spiritual experience, he might truly after a while brook no contradiction upon the subject, but that would be merely because he was drunk with this kind of wine. While he proceeded with his indulgence and neglected his true progress, which is always dependent upon his purity of motive and conquest of his known or ascertainable defects, nature went on accumulating the store of illusory appearances with which he satiated himself.

It is certain that any student who devotes himself to these astral happenings will see them increase. But were our whole life devoted to and rewarded by an enormous succession of phenomena, it is also equally certain that the casting off of the body would be the end of all that sort of experience, without our having added really anything to our stock of true knowledge.

The astral plane, which is the same as that of our psychic senses, is as full of strange sights and sounds as an untrodden South American forest, and has to be well understood before the student can stay there long without danger. While we can overcome the dangers of a forest by the use of human inventions, whose entire object is the physical destruction of the noxious things encountered there, we have no such aids when treading the astral labyrinth. We may be physically brave and say that no fear can enter into us, but no untrained or merely curious seeker is able to say just what effect will result to his outer senses from the attack or influence encountered by the psychical senses.

And the person who revolves selfishly around himself as a center is in greater danger of delusion than any one else, for he has not the assistance that comes from being united in thought with all other sincere seekers. One may stand in a dark house where none of the objects can be distinguished and quite plainly see all that is illuminated outside; in the same way we can see from out of the blackness of our own house—our hearts—the objects now and then illuminated outside by the astral light; but we gain nothing. We must first dispel the *inner* darkness before trying to see into the darkness without; we must *know ourselves* before knowing things extraneous to ourselves.

This is not the road that seems easiest to students. Most of them find it far pleasanter and as they think faster, work, to look on all these outside allurements, and to cultivate all psychic senses, to the exclusion of real spiritual work.

The true road is plain and easy to find, it is so easy that very many would-be students miss it because they cannot believe it to be so simple.

The way lies through the heart;
Ask there and wander not;
Knock loud, nor hesitate
Because at first the sounds
Reverberating, seem to mock thee.
Nor, when the door swings wide,
Revealing shadows black as night,
Must thou recoil.
Within, the Master's messengers
Have waited patiently:
That Master is Thyself!

1888

The American Transcendentalists discovered that life could be made a sublime thing without any assistance from circumstances or outside sources of pleasure and prosperity. Of course this had been discovered many times before, and Emerson only took up again the cry raised by Epictetus. But every man has to discover this fact freshly for himself, and when once he has realised it he knows that he would be a wretch if he did not endeavour to make the possibility a reality in his own life. The stoic became sublime because he recognised his own absolute responsibility and did not try to evade it; the Transcendentalist was even more, because he had faith in the unknown and untried possibilities which lay within himself. The occultist fully recognises the responsibility and claims his title by having both tried and acquired knowledge of his own possibilities. The Theosophist who is at all in earnest, sees his responsibility and endeavours to find knowledge, living, in the meantime, up to the highest standard of which he is aware.

—LUCIFER

letters • questions • comment

In The Ocean of Theosophy, *Mr. Judge says: "Some works can only be performed by the Master, while other works require the assistance of the companions. It is the Master's work to preserve the true philosophy, but the help of the companions is needed to rediscover and promulgate it." Why is the work of the companions essential to improving the world?*

It is often taken for granted by those who want to make the world a better place that *other* people have to be changed. Their minds, their actions, their beliefs must be altered, either by coercion or by the force of irresistible logic. But the intent of the Theosophical movement is to arouse in people the awareness that the most far-reaching and advantageous changes in the environment are preceded by fundamental changes in themselves. It is quite true that extensive external changes in society may be affected by organizing collective activity according to some overall plan. The energies of a mass of people may be mobilized from a common fear or through self-interest. But such forms of collective action depend upon outside causes and are subject to change. Unless basic principles underlying plans for action are accepted and supported by those who will carry them out, the basis for union will soon dissolve. Propaganda loses its persuasion in time, and the polarizing effect of fear cannot last indefinitely. Only when appeal is to the enduring qualities of the real man—to his courage, his common humanity, sense of justice or self-respect—does action of enduring benefit result.

But if man is made of thought, eternally thinking—making both his prisons and his avenues to freedom—his evolution can be accomplished only by changing himself. According to Theosophy, man is not separate from the rest of the universe. He is the focus of all the forces, seen and unseen, that comprise the natural world around him. Of these powers and potentialities he is still but dimly aware. Inevitably, therefore, his thoughts in the past, evolved into actions, will return, in the wider cycles of history, as irresistible trends of thought and feeling, to both plague him with diffi-

culties and inspire him to splendid deeds. For this reason he needs most of all to become aware of the cyclic return of his thoughts and motives, so that he may become the conscious creator, instead of merely the experiencer, of his self-made destiny.

It follows, then, that any serious changes for the better will result from self-understanding. Even so, the conventional scrutiny of the susceptibilities of the human animal—its proclivities for falling victim to self-interest, for protecting, at any cost, the bundle of opinions and self-images we wear as our Karmic inheritance—is not enough. Habits of thought have an energy of their own, generated by our idea of self. Metamorphosed into countless different forms, they continue to reappear in new guises until we learn to control them at their source. For this the teachings serve as guidelines to the discovery of what we really are. There is need, also, to trace the source of our aspirations to an inner divinity of which the sentimental expressions of the personal man are but an imperfect caricature. Throughout the ages, theosophical philosophy has provided the rational basis for the realization of this principle of divinity in man.

We might conclude that men would be acting in accord with their inner nature if they were more imaginative, more self-reliant, more responsible. But even when these virtues prevail, they may be turned to the service of self-interest, as in the case of the American pioneers in their conquest of the West. Surely there is a wider application of brotherhood than that of the racial or national group.

The help of the companions, then, would bring a devotion that demands both study of the doctrines and of themselves. To make Theosophical ideas into a living body of truth, sages are needed who know how to provide the intellectual and spiritual impulse in teachings that correspond to the opportunities of the times. But who, except those who recognize their importance, and who, still sharing in the strengths and weaknesses of the rest of mankind, are willing, by self-induced and self-devised efforts, to try to embody these ideas, and can *cause* them to leaven the mind of the race?

The crucial importance of this work of "rediscovery and promulgation" to the success of the Teachers' efforts is clearly implied in H.P.B.'s statement to Mr. Judge of the possibilities of the

Theosophical movement in this cycle. She said:

> We are not working merely that people may call themselves *Theosophists,* but that the doctrines we cherish may affect and leaven the whole mind of this century. This alone can be accomplished by a small earnest band of workers, who work for no human reward, no earthly recognition, but who, supported and sustained by a belief in that Universal Brotherhood of which our Masters are a part, work steadily, faithfully, in understanding and putting forth for consideration the doctrines of life and duty that have come down to us from immemorial time. Falter not so long as a few devoted ones will work to keep the nucleus existing. You were not directed to found and realise a Universal Brotherhood, but to form the nucleus for one; for it is only when the nucleus is formed that the accumulations can begin that will end in future years, however far, in the formation of that body which we have in view.

Finding the Path Within

Man's false conceptions of life are what prevent him from knowing the truth, and it is evident that the first step towards true perception lies in throwing aside the prejudices and predilections he has lived by. And there is always help. Never have we been left alone. Always there are beings greater in evolution than we, who return to this field of physical existence to help us, to wake us up to a perception of our natures. Such has been the mission of all Divine Incarnations down the ages. Those beings have come and lived among us, have become "in all things like unto us," as was said of Jesus, in order that the human words They spoke should be words we would understand. They meet us on the basis of our ideas and try to clarify them and set them in a true course. They can do nothing to stop what we have done and what we want to do; They can not interfere; but They can help us to see the right direction, if we are so willed; They can give help when we turn to that direction which They indicate—that Path which They themselves followed so many ages ago.

—Robert Crosbie

FROM "THE THEOSOPHICAL FORUM"

The Meaning of the "Fall"

Is it possible that our lower nature is composed of groups of elemental beings (sub-human) which under the higher tutelage can be welded into a force for good, rather than a something evil that has to be cast off? If so, ought not the Higher Ego to be considered a trainer and teacher of the Lower Manas rather than as a foe, even as a parent restrains his children from wrong-doing, and would not this view make the conflict between the animal and spiritual nature easier to most people?

W.Q.J.—The editor is right in saying the lower nature cannot be cast off, but must be subjugated. We might as well say we can annihilate universal mind as to say we can "cast off" anything that is a part of nature and going to make us what we are. The lower nature must be discovered in all its ramifications and carefully subdued, as thus it is transformed and not cast off. But I cannot agree with him in respect to "sub-human elementals" composing us and which he calls "fanciful." They are not fanciful, even though the questioner views them in the wrong light and the editor in no light at all. If there is any point strongly made in occultism it is that we are a compound of lives, that every part of us is so made, and hence it follows that our lower nature is made of these lives. There is no vacuum in the universe void of a life. But while this is so, these lives, in so far as they go to make up man, are not to be considered as separate beings from himself whom he can "educate," as inferred in the question, from a position as man which is apart from them. They exist in him, and as he lives and thinks so he impresses on them his thoughts and acts, and as they are leaving him every moment of time it follows that a stream of these lives of many grades and sorts is continually being projected from him into space and forming his own karma. For they are unintelligent and only act in their own way, just as water acts when it runs down hill. If we regard them as beings that we are educating we will fall into superstition, but if, on the other hand, we say they do not exist and have no place in us, as the editor

infers, we will never come to right knowledge of the universe as it is.

They are matter, in fact, and a certain quantity of it comes into the charge, so to say, of every man, and every one is therefore responsible for the impressions he gives to the atoms that make him up, and if he does not live aright he will have to suffer the consequences sooner or later. For these very elementals are the means whereby karma operates, for without them—considering atoms as points of sensitiveness—there would be a break and no way for karma to have effect. If they do not exist, then there is no way to make the connection between matter and mind and thought and circumstance.

The conflict between the higher and the lower can be made easy only by the old rule "to look on all parts of the universe as containing spiritual beings, the same in kind and only differing from each other in degree."

If every one starts from and returns into "that" (spirit), what is the object of existence in matter? Is this the only way to fulfil the soul's desire? (From California).

W.Q.J.—The questioner should enquire a little further as to the meaning of "matter," for if thereby mere mortal material life is meant, the truth about matter has not been grasped. The worlds of heaven, of the "devas" or "angels," are worlds of matter, and yet such worlds are sought after by those who ask the question under consideration.

Furthermore the occultists hold that *spirit* has not as yet incarnated fully in the existing race, but will do so in future ages; then men can say that they have a spirit. At present the men who are incarnated spirits are Adepts or Mahatmas. Toward the moment of this grand incarnation we are hastening, and the experience now being undergone is to settle the question whether we will become fit for such a tremendous event or whether we will fail. Assuredly all are called to this grand work, but just as certainly some will not be chosen.

Was the "fall into generation" on the physical plane a normal feature of human evolution, as stated in some Theosophical books; or was it abnormal and not intended by nature, as said in other Theosophical books?

W.Q.J.—It would be well if every one were to quote when they

say, "as said in some Theosophical books," giving name of writer and of book, for it is very unfair to the FORUM and any writer in it to be compelled to answer to the purport merely of a statement in some volume. The context of such statement might put the whole matter in a different light, or we might find that there was a misquotation.

It cannot be said by a well informed Theosophist that nature has any "intentions," nor should any man have the temerity to claim an acquaintance with those if they existed. If in the writings of some Theosophists a reference can be found to "nature's intentions," the context will certainly show that the words were used figuratively in describing apparently settled natural laws.

It seems to me that the "fall into generation," when explained Theosophically, is not abnormal. Since things are as they are under Karmic Law, according to law and not by chance, there can be no step in it that is abnormal. Besides this, the word "abnormal" is one that is used by us to designate that which appears to be out of the usual course solely because we do not know all the facts and factors. As in the case of the eccentric movements of certain planets, which led to the discovery of another one which had caused the eccentricity. Before the last one was found the movements of the others were certainly abnormal, but ceased to be so considered when the discovery was made. Hence "abnormal" is a word that describes a thing only relatively and not absolutely.

But H. P. Blavatsky, who is, we suppose, a good Theosophical authority, speaks clearly enough upon our question. In Vol. 2, *Secret Doctrine,* p. 62, line 19, she says: "Moreover there are two 'Falls' in Theology: the rebellion of the Archangels and their 'Fall,' and the 'Fall' of Adam and Eve. Thus the lower as well as the higher Hierarchies are charged with a supposed crime. The word 'supposed' is the true and correct term, for in both cases it is founded *on a misconception.* Both are considered in Occultism as Karmic effects, and *both belong to the law of Evolution:* intellectual and spiritual on the one hand, physical and psychical on the other. The 'Fall' is a universal allegory." And on p. 228 of the same book she gives a more detailed view of the fall of certain of the Dhyanis "whose turn it was to incarnate as the Egos of the immortal, but *on this plane senseless,* monads," stating in the second paragraph on the same page: "the 'fall of *man*' was no fall,

for he was irresponsible."

Then as if to furnish forth the answer for the question as to the "intentions" of nature, the same author heads her explanation of Stanza II (in the 2d Vol., p. 52) "Nature unaided fails," and on p. 56, second paragraph, she says: "Thus physical nature, when left to herself in the creation of animal and man, is shown to have failed." If the second volume of the *Secret Doctrine* proves anything about "intentions" in the matter of evolution, it is that nature had none whatever, and, if she had, failure would follow attempt at realization. This subject is interesting and, studied with the help of Madame Blavatsky's book, will be of benefit to the student.

If all our sufferings in this life are caused by the misdeeds of a former life, how can any combination of sidereal influences at birth affect our fate?

W.Q.J.—A thorough acquaintance with the doctrine of Karma and with what is actually claimed for Astrology by those qualified to speak, would result in an answer to this question. Astrology is not soothsaying nor card-reading; reading omens is soothsaying; reading cards is a form of divination: Astrology is neither of these. All that is claimed for it is that the whole assemblage of stars indicate, as being a vast machine or clockwork, just exactly what is the state or condition of any one spot in the whole mass. Is this any more absurd than to say that a watchmaker can tell from the movements of a watch just where the hands will be at any particular moment, and likewise from the hands alone where the different cogs and other parts are within? If common minds, and ignorant as well as venal practitioners of Astrology, make a stock of their imitations, wrong conceptions, and base uses of it, that is no reason why the FORUM should sweepingly denounce Astrology. As well denounce real Christianity because of the base coinage labelled with its name. Taking now the oft-made assertion that "Karma governs all worlds up to that of Brahma," we reply to the question that our Karma and the stars are inextricably linked together, for if we had no Karma there would for us be no stars. It is just because the Karma of any being at birth is fixed from his prior one that the great clockwork of the skies shows unerringly to the sage —but not to the dabbler nor to the modern abusers of Astrology— the Karma or present fate of the being. But if, as so often done by even the best of Theosophists, we separate any part of our uni-

verse from any other portion, putting one under the influence of Karma and another not, then, of course such questions as this one cannot be answered. The doctrines of the Wisdom-Religion are naught if not all-embracing, are useless and misleading if not applicable to the greatest as well as the very least of circumstances or worlds; and so we answer that not only do sidereal positions *indicate* our Karma, but even the very clouds, the wind, and the hour of the day or night in which we may be born, do the same.

(Questions and answers included in this installment are reprinted from the following issues of the *Theosophical Forum,* in this sequence: April, 1892; May, 1889; March, 1890; July, 1890.)

THE PARADOX OF INACTION

The individual's consciousness in meditation takes him out of history; it gives him a glimpse of the total field beyond his personal location. At first this glimpse is destructive of identity, but when the person finds that he survives the loss of his ego, he realizes that there is more to his identity and he begins to see that just as there is more to him, there is more to history than politics. When one discovers a field effect to values and conflict, the immediate consequence is to be changed from an actor to an observer. All positions on the wheel seem unsatisfying and incomplete. To become conscious of the field, one must move into a different space off that wheel, but once off the wheel, one seems to be escaping the very condition of being human. Since the condition of being human is to be ignorant, violent, loving and hating, and charging blindly into cages and then screaming for freedom, the escape from being human is, as the Lord Gautama pointed out a long time ago, not necessarily an evil thing. Even the Buddhism of contemplation allowed for the Bodhisattvas of action. The artist, the man who lives at the interface between pure imagination and its material realization, perhaps best understands the paradoxical nature of action. "Act and remain apart from action."

—WILLIAM IRWIN THOMPSON

on the lookout

Thoughts on the Self

The ideas of the self bequeathed to us by the past are examined by Joyce Carol Oates in "The Myth of the Isolated Artist" (May, *Psychology Today*). Speaking of the introspective probing so characteristic of the times, she says: "The collective mind of our world is making a supreme effort to transcend itself." This may be achieved, Miss Oates thinks, through a fresh evaluation of traditional concepts of self. The highest function of the artist is to offer material which contributes to and illuminates this process. She says:

> It is my conviction that all human beings "create" personality. Some do so passively, helplessly, and are in a sense *created by* others, whom they come to fear or hate; others create their personalities half-consciously, and are therefore half-pleased with their creations, though they suspect something is missing; a few human beings, gifted with the ability to "see" themselves as "other," and not overly intoxicated with the selfness of the self, actually devise works of art that are autobiographical statements of a hypothetical, reality-testing nature, which they submit with varying degrees of confidence to the judgment of their culture.

Novelist's Opportunity

The artist—in this case, no doubt, the novelist—in Miss Oates' view, may become a conscious participant in the shaping of the idea of the self. While all men participate in this process, and are in this sense artists, since they play a part in the making of civilization, the artist, by reason of his creative resources and trained capacities, works at the task more consciously than others. It is not difficult to illustrate the novelist's contributions. Herman Melville's Captain Ahab in *Moby Dick* became a type for the understanding of an age of American history. Ivan Karamazov grew into a symbol of the tortured egoity of the awakened intellectual who struggles to find meaning and justice in a world that cannot be understood save through a philosophy that goes beyond the limited

pieties of his saintly brother Alyosha's religion. The artist creates conceptions of the human being which approximate the evolution of the self-idea in the time of his writing, and in some cases, where true genius is at work, presses his imagination on to the portrayal of future possibility. As the author of *Light on the Path* observes, the novelist has it within his power to speak of the first trials of human beings, as they hearken to inner urgings and direct their steps along the early stages of the path. But only poets, he adds, can intimate the subtlety and danger of the next ordeal to be faced.

The Larger Self

But to be truly useful to his time, the artist, as Miss Oates contends, must free himself of the "selfness of the self," which is an excess of pride in his insight, and realize that what he can do well unites rather than separates him from his fellows. He contributes what he has come to understand to a common store of knowledge that grows with the experience of all. She writes:

> In surrendering one's isolation, one does not surrender his own uniqueness, he only surrenders his isolation. It is time for psychology to take very seriously the propositions advanced by all the great mystics—that the "self" is part of a larger reservoir of energy, call it any name you like. As long as the myth of separate and competitive "selves" endures, we will have a society obsessed with adolescent ideas of being superior, of conquering, of destroying. The pronoun "I" is as much a metaphor as "schizophrenia," and it has undergone the same "metaphor-into-myth" process. . . .
>
> Creative work, like scientific work, should be greeted as a communal effort—an attempt by an individual to give voice to many voices, an attempt to synthesize and explore and analyze.

Quality of the Instrument

In her article, "The Tidal Wave," H.P.B. confirmed one of her contemporaries in saying that literature "is the confession of social life, reflecting all its sins, and all its acts of baseness as of heroism." In this contribution to *Lucifer* she drew attention to the vast influence for good of writers such as Dostoevsky, who held up a mirror to the crimes and injustices of his age, while at the same time gave heroic inspiration to those in whom the impulse to regeneration was awakening. Miss Oates' idea of the creation by the artist of a personal vehicle through which to express the

perceptions he acquires brings to mind H.P.B.'s discussion of genius in the article of that title. She says:

> It is the very nature of the Spiritual Entity itself, or our *Ego,* which keeps on weaving new life-woofs into the web of reincarnation on the loom of time, from the beginnings to the ends of the great Life-Cycle. This it is that asserts itself stronger than in the average man, through its personality; so that what we call "the manifestations of genius" in a person, are only the more or less successful efforts of that EGO to assert itself on the outward plane of its objective form—the man of clay—in the matter-of-fact, daily life of the latter.

Secret of Greatness

> The EGOS of a Newton, an Æschylus, or a Shakespeare, are of the same essence and substance as the Egos of a yokel, an ignoramus, a fool, or even an idiot; and the self-assertion of their informing *genii* depends on the physiological and material construction of the physical man. No Ego differs from another Ego, in its primordial or original essence and nature. That which makes one mortal a great man and of another a vulgar, silly person is, as said, the quality and make-up of the physical shell or casing, and the adequacy or inadequacy of brain and body to transmit and give expression to the light of the real, *Inner* man; and this aptness or inaptness is, in its turn, the result of Karma.

Genius, then, is indeed the "creation" of an instrument responsive to the purposes of the incarnated intelligence, and since all men are engaged in this task, all men are artists, or could be, even as Miss Oates suggests.

Cosmic Rebirth

The June *Intellectual Digest* presents an interview with four Princeton scientists concerning modern physical theory. One of the men questioned was Dr. John H. Wheeler, who studied nuclear fission with Niels Bohr and has recently been working on the explanation of the "black holes" in space, which he believes are phenomena of gravitational collapse. Toward the end of the discussion in *Intellectual Digest,* the interviewer said:

> The end of the world is anticipated by the existence of the black hole, a star having undergone gravitational collapse. This phenomenon is an invisible omen of the future, you've said, because gravitational collapse is the ultimate destiny of the universe. But you have also suggested that this end will become a new beginning—that something else, something new and dif-

ferent, will be born from the ashes.

Dr. Wheeler replied with this comment:

> I am thinking of the oriental concepts of reincarnation and of cycle after cycle, not only of man, but of the universe itself. I would be the last person to know how to analyze this kind of idea in a sensible way.

"Physical Theory" Inadequate

The physicist continued by saying that he did not see how "individuality" could survive the process of universal collapse, but later in the discussion he added a suggestion which may throw light on this problem. He said:

> No theory of physics which deals only with physics will ever explain physics. I believe that as we go on trying to understand the universe, we are at the same time trying to understand man. Today I think we are beginning to suspect that man is not a tiny cog that doesn't really make much difference to the running of the huge machine but rather that there is a much more intimate tie between man and the universe than we heretofore suspected. Only as we recognize that tie will we be able to make headway into some of the most difficult issues that confront us. Nobody thinking about it from this point of view can fail to ask himself whether the particles and their properties are not somehow related to making man possible. Man, the start of the analysis, man, the end of the analysis—because the physical world is in some deep sense tied to the human being.

Mystery Dispelled

Many years ago, Sir Arthur Eddington wrote reflectively about scientific study of the physical world, saying (in 1920):

> We have found a strange footprint on the shores of the unknown. We have devised profound theories, one after the other, to account for its origin. At last, we have succeeded in reconstructing the creature that made the footprint. And lo! it is our own.

Some day, perhaps, as physical scientists continue to recognize the imprint of man in the phenomena of nature and life, they will reach the conclusion that the problem of self-knowledge is not different from the problem of knowing the workings of the world, and that the mystery of individuality is dispelled by finding the one self to be the reality behind all existing things.

Urban Jangle

Research by three New York psychologists, reported in the May *Psychology Today,* indicates that over a period of time everyday city noises exert an adverse effect on the general efficiency of the human nervous system. Laboratory experiments measuring the effects of sporadic, uncontrollable noise on office workers showed that it reduced tolerance of frustration and that its effects persisted long after the noise itself ceased. It was also found that unpredictable noises were more harmful than intensity. The study further covered the apartment dwellings of a group of New York City schoolchildren. There the researchers discovered that tenants on the ground floor had greater loss of ability to distinguish between similar sounds than those who lived in upper story apartments. This was correlated with reduced reading proficiency among children.

Effects of Noise

On the cumulative effects of noise on reading ability, the authors say:

> We found a significant relationship between floor level and auditory discrimination in children who had lived in the apartment for four years or more. Thus, children who had been exposed to high levels of noise (those on the lower floors) for four years or more experienced a loss in auditory discrimination.
>
> We found a similar association between floor level and scores in word knowledge, reading comprehension and reading total.
>
> As with auditory discrimination, the relationship held for children who had resided in the apartment for four years or more, but not for those who had been there less than four years.
>
> These findings suggest that length of exposure and intensity of noise were important in determining the ability to discriminate between sounds and reading achievement. We suspect that the reading deficit is largely a function of poor auditory discrimination. The two factors were, in fact, significantly correlated. In any case, we can say that both auditory discriminatory and reading achievement were related to the intensity of the noise and the length of exposure to it.

Price of Urban Life

The possibility that social and economic factors might have influenced the results of this experiment was recognized and measures

taken to control them, according to the authors. The article sums up their conclusions:

> The research reported here suggests there are four factors of importance in determining the effects of noise on behavior: intensity, duration, predictability and controllability. The clangor found in modern cities is frequently intense, unpredictable, and largely uncontrollable. Our evidence warns that decreased tolerance for frustration, loss of efficiency, deficits in auditory discrimination, and lowered reading achievement may be the price for living in modern cities.

The deleterious effects of loud noise have been noted for years, from the large populations afflicted with imperfect hearing (THEOSOPHY 18:37) to experiments with plants whose growth was stunted by exposure to simulated city noises. In 1968 the *New York Times* noted investigations in Germany which showed that there was a correlation between certain kinds of occupational noise and abnormal heart rhythms and brain wave patterns suggestive of personality disorders in the workers. (THEOSOPHY, 57:190.)

Nature's Music

Lookout for last April called attention to an article in February's *Harper's* by Dr. Lewis Thomas, in which the writer proposed that all living processes produce an accompanying sound, and that nature might be regarded as performing a continuous symphony. The harsh dissonances of the city's jarring noises must make an ugly contrast to this music of nature, and we well may wonder if there can ever be a harmonious life for human beings until the sounds produced by man-made arrangements blend naturally with the spontaneous melodies and rhythms of the several kingdoms, to make what Dr. Thomas termed a "grand canonical ensemble." Our ears are tuned to a comparatively narrow band of audible sound, but the music of nature must range over many octaves, all having their effect on our lives. A passage in *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 633), dealing with experiments by John Tyndall, may help to show how extensively our lives are surrounded by combinations of sound or vibration:

> Atoms are called "Vibrations" in Occultism; also "Sound"—collectively. This does not interfere with Mr. Tyndall's scientific discovery. He traced, on the lower rung of the ladder of monadic being, the whole course of the *atmospheric vibrations*—and this constitutes the *objective* part of the process in nature.

> He has traced and recorded the rapidity of their motion and transmission; the force of their impact; their setting up vibrations in the tympanum and their transmission of these to the stolithes, etc., etc., till the vibration of the auditory nerve commences—and a new phenomenon now takes place: the *subjective side* of the process or *the sensation of Sound*. Does he perceive or see it? No; for his specialty is to discover the behaviour of matter. But why should not a psychic see it, a spiritual seer, whose inner Eye is opened, and who can see through the veil of matter? The waves and undulations of Science are all produced by atoms propelling their molecules into activity *from within*. Atoms fill the immensity of Space, and by their continuous vibration *are* that MOTION which keeps the wheels of Life perpetually going. It is that inner work that produces the natural phenomena called the correlation of Forces.

On Learning to Read

Speaking last February on the teaching of reading to children (at a conference at Claremont College), Dr. Malcolm Douglass said that reading is a skill that ought to be taught only indirectly, if at all. He advocates some "benign neglect" of direct instruction. He believes that if interesting books are provided and mental stimulation is encouraged, a minimum amount of instruction is necessary—children can learn to read without formal instruction just as they learn to speak long before entering school. According to a report in the *Los Angeles Times* (Feb. 25):

> Reading is a natural outgrowth of listening and talking, he said, and it is a mystery why educators think that this progressive line of development should stop with oral language and then require formal instruction for written words.
>
> Little is known about how all this occurs, how children learn language in either oral or written form, Douglass said.

Minimum Instruction

Commenting that many countries giving less attention than we do to reading instruction have fewer reading problems, he added:

> Most of the other countries find beginning reading problems in about 5% of the school population and that figure is reduced to 1% or 2% within the first few years of schooling.
>
> "This is the result in the face of an absolute minimum of instruction (in reading)," Douglass stressed.

There are, of course, some children who need more instruction than others, but Dr. Douglass emphasizes the fact that reading

should be considered a *natural* process; it should be the result o each child's own internal cycles of growth and not a response to group "norm." Dr. Douglass says that funds now spent on tryin to teach children *how* to read, ought to be used for providing ma terials drawn from the world's wealth of good literature which, i it were available to them, more children would *want* to read.

"Just Books in Profusion"

The natural awakening of Manas is behind Dr. Douglass' con viction that children find it natural to want to read. If heavy handed educational methods do not get in the way, interest in readin grows spontaneously. This is what Joseph Featherstone says (i *Radical School Reform*) about the children in the Infants School of England:

> They hang around library corners long before they can read, handling the books, looking at pictures, trying to find words they do know, listening and watching as the teacher hears other children reading. . . .
>
> Increasingly in good infant schools, there are no text books and no class readers. There are just books in profusion. . . . As a check, cautious teachers ask them [the children] to go on their own through a graded reading series—which one doesn't matter.

"Problem Schools"

Confidence in the child, that the child will educate himself knowing from experience that children, under normal, invitin circumstances will take the steps toward learning to read—thes are the reasons for the success of the Infant Schools. Another wa of saying the same thing is by Herbert Kohl in his recent book *Reading, How To:*

> There is no reading problem. There are problem teachers and problem schools. Most people who fail to learn how to read in our society are victims of a fiercely competitive system of training that requires failure. If talking and walking were taught in most schools we might end up with as many mutes and cripples as we now have non-readers. However, learning to read is no more difficult than learning to walk or talk. The skill can be acquired in a natural and informal manner and in a variety of settings from school to home to the streets.

Indians Found School

A small but encouraging indication of a balancing of account between the American Indians and their white subjugators ma

be recognized in an Indian-managed high school in Ramah, New Mexico (*New York Times,* July 15). According to the report:

> Unlike nearly all other Indians in America, the people of Ramah manage and control their own high school, through a seven-person, all-Navajo school board and a staff three-fourths of whom are Navajos.
>
> The Ramah experiment, though incomplete and in some ways puzzling, is being hailed by Indian leaders and it is being closely watched by the Federal Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), which is officially committed to a policy of phasing out its own century-old system of Indian boarding schools.

Failure of Bureau Schools

The *Times* continues:

> About one-third of America's 250,000 Indian school children attend these B.I.A. schools, created originally to speed up Indian assimilation. The idea was to remove Indian children from the influences of their parents and tribes, teach them English and train them for work (usually menial) in white society. For example they were trained to be dishwashers or domestics.
>
> But the B.I.A. schools have failed, in most instances, either to assimilate the children or to educate them. Many children resisting "whitewash," have dropped out; others have resorted to alcohol or drugs. The suicide rate among Indian teenagers is four times the national average for the age group.
>
> Nor have the public schools, as a rule, enjoyed more success. Increasingly, as Indians migrate from reservations to nearby cities and towns, the children find themselves in schools controlled by white boards and staffed by white teachers.

In 1970, a delegation of Indians from Ramah went to Washington in search of funds to start a new high school. The delegation's spokesman, Mrs. Bertha Lorenzo, told Indian Bureau officials: "Our children are unhappy. They run away from your boarding school; they cry themselves to sleep. We want to bring them home where we can give them love and education." Supported mainly by grants from the Bureau and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, the school has an enrollment of 155 children and offers a standard academic program. The curriculum also includes courses in Navajo history, Navajo culture, and a class in Indian consumerism, described by one teacher as "how not to get ripped off at the trading post." Closely allied to the school is an FM radio station in the village which broadcasts in Navajo and, together with the school, provides jobs and self-confidence.

Funding Doubtful

But even though the school experiment, of comparatively shor duration so far, has, through abundant funding and governmenta cooperation, germinated extensive changes—an attendance rate o 95 per cent and student participation in such projects as a maga zine "Tsa' Aszi" (Yucca plant)—the program has not yet resulte in an equally startling improvement in test scores in reading an arithmetic skills. This has caused the Bureau to question the fur ther allocation of funds. The lag in test scores behind the enthus asm and productivity in other areas are accounted for, accordin to the school's staff, by the fact that the students have not bee accustomed to taking formal tests, and that most speak Englis only as a second language and are handicapped by several year of poor teaching and failures.

Undaunted, the community has asked the Indian Bureau to ex pand the project by providing facilities for a new school begin ning with kindergarten. If this experiment's modest achievement were to supply the guidelines for further reforms in the adminis tration of Indian affairs, and not remain just a "showcase" of gov ernmental generosity, the resulting encouragement of Indian initia tive might in time bring ingenious solutions to problems now bur densome for both the red and white races.

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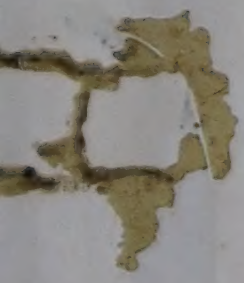

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